



## LOUISVILLE JOURNAL GARDEN STREET, BETWEEN THIRD AND FOURTH PRENTICE, HENDERSON, & OSBORNE, PUBLISHERS.

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Geo. B. PRENTICE, Editor.  
F. B. SHIFFRIN, Associate Editor.  
OLIVER LUCAS, Local Editor and Reporter.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 24, 1861.

The prevailing conviction amongst conservative Unionists is that the whole subject of slavery in its relations to the war is more or less in the hands of the General of the army than in the hands of Congress; and, accordingly, that Congress in this respect can do better than to abide by what it has done already, and leave the rest to the sound discretion of our General, subject of course to the correction of the Commander-in-Chief. We hope that Congress itself will take this view of the question. A volume might be written in support of the views without exhausting the argument.

The subject of the exchange of prisoners is at length attracting the attention of the country. So far as we have noticed there is but one opinion on the subject. There seems indeed to be a desire, for "why," says the Boston Post, "there can be any longer delay in effecting exchanges of prisoners, a general rule, is more than we can comprehend. Like this, like these, are we permitted to stand upon delicate points of etiquette or of law. Justice, humanity, those who have imperiled their lives for the country, require that they should be taken from Southern dungeons and restored to their places in the army. Disease and death are working out their energies, vitality, and still the Government does not effectually move."

Men who entered the country's service full of strength and high hope by the vicissitudes of war are taken prisoners, and are confined in the felon's cell, and from fear that too much courage, too much recognition, shall be conceded to their captors, these men are permitted to rot away and perish. Precedent will sustain the action of the Government in an exchange, in a formal exchange; or at least the way we have received their flags of truce, as from regiments dealing with us in the relation of belligerents, has placed us in the relation of belligerents dealing with belligerents and yet not absolutely destroyed the relation of a government dealing with rebels. The highest sentiments of humanity require that we should go further, and that immediately, before it is too late, and effect a release of those who are in confinement. It is not a matter for argument, but rather for appeal to the feelings of the Government. By the exchange humanity will gain much, and so will patriotism, and the efficiency of the army by the restoration to its ranks of those who should be there, and the voice of the people should not be silent until the end is effected.

The instant of these remarks cannot be fairly disputed.

The express the prevailing opinion of the country. The National Intelligence, with characteristic punctilios, "hums" approval, and but "hesitates" objection. "We observe," says that able and venerable journal, "that many of our contemporaries continue to give expression to what they represent to be the popular dissatisfaction with the inaction of the Administration in the matter of adopting a systematic and uniform plan for the exchange of prisoners. This sensitiveness, we doubt not, may be largely traced to the feeling of personal sympathy cherished generally in the loyal States for those who have incurred the hardships of capture and imprisonment in the military service of our country."

Whatever political necessities may be alleged in defense of a policy which causes to their detriment, it does not at all mitigate the severity of treatment to which many find themselves exposed, through no defect in their claims to the rights of war, but simply because of the illegal and insurrectionary character of those against whom they have been called by their Government to contend. It is thus that the curse of sedition, by one of those reactions which offend the natural sense of equity, is in its effects visited upon the head of the innocent and guilty alike.

And we doubt not that this feeling has been intensified by the perception that the theory on which the Government is supposed to deny to our captured soldiers the benefits resulting from a systematic exchange of prisoners has not been observed with a consistency and thoroughness which make its retention in this regard a matter of any great moment to the National Government. It is urged that we are merely playing with words, while the thing we ignore is going on. Do we not virtually concede to the rebels the status of belligerents every day? What is implied by the flags of truce that pass continually between the lines of the opposing armies? What did the agreement of Gen. Butler and Com. Stringham to receive the Hatteras garrison as prisoners of war amount to? What did the release of Col. P. G. T. Beauregard, and parole, by Gen. McClellan, in Western Virginia mean? or what means the "informal release" of Confederate prisoners of war, in reliance on the general of the enemy for a reciprocation of this favor in the interest of our own captive soldiers? Such a saving of dignity at the expense of our suffering troops is hardly worth the price paid for it, at least in the estimation of practical minds.

These reflections gather especial strength from the consideration that the refusal on our part to formally exchange prisoners involves really no saving of dignity whatever but rather a loss of dignity. The attempt under the circumstances to keep up a show of the assumption that we are not in a state of civil war is certainly far more undignified than would be a frank proclamation of what we are every day proclaiming indirectly in a hundred different ways. There is a want of dignity and of prudence also in the attempt to shut one's eyes to the real formalities of our adversary but not in recognizing him as he is. We are in reality in the mode of a gigantic civil war, and the effort to disguise the fact by forms is neither dignified nor discreet nor possible.

All the dignity as well as the reason and humanity is therefore on the side of the general demand of the country. We trust a compliance with this most humane and rational and dignified claim will not be longer put off. A prompt compliance will strengthen the national cause in every conceivable respect.

General A. S. Johnson intimates to the Richmond Government that the contemplated move of the Union army against Columbus, Kentucky, is only a feint, the real contemplated movement being against Bowling Green, in his judgment. Probably General Polk has intimated to the Richmond Government, that the appearance move on Bowling Green and Columbus are both feints, the real movement being against East Tennessee. We guess they are all scared.

REBELLION COMPLIMENT TO HUMPHREY MARSHALL.—The Nashville Banner of the 10th inst. says:

Humphrey is going to turn out the Price of Kentucky. He is going about his work on the right way.

We hadn't heard before of Humphrey's condition.

For the Louisville Journal.  
ENLARGED WITH ENGLAND IN CONSEQUENCE  
OF THE FLUXE OF SLIDELL AND MASON.

It is not at all for the interest of Great Nations to go to war with one another, nowadays, for trifles. Abominated by the stupendous magnitude of the struggle, for very life, for more than life, at home, we are quite sure that our own Government will be very guard in reference to giving needless offence to any power, least of all to that power whose neighboring colonies, and whose magnificent Navy would render its hostility particularly inconvenient. And on her part, whilst she needs our corn, and desires our cotton and the general advantages of our vast mutual commerce, it cannot be believed that England will be ever ready to take offence. The bonds, for good behavior, under which each is placed, are, however, the strongest bonds.

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